

FEBRUARY 12, 2003

SCHAKOWSKY: CONSUMERS COULD SOON BE A PHONE CALL AWAY FROM OPTING OUT OF UNWANTED & HARASSING TELEMARKETING CALLS

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL), ranking Democrat on the Commerce, Trade, and Consumer Protection Subcommittee, today said consumers could soon be a phone call away from opting out of unwanted and harassing telemarketing calls.[] []

Consumers can enroll free of service using the Internet or a toll-free number in a national do-not-call database administered by the Federal Trade Commission.[] Telemarketers will be required to check the database every three months, and those marketers who call consumers on the registry could be fined up to \$11,000 for each violation.

The House of Representatives approved the Do-Not-Call Implementation Act to speed up the implementation of the database by allowing the FTC to immediately begin collecting user fees from telemarketers.[] Without this legislation, the FTC would be forced to wait until 2004 to implement the register[]

"We all appreciate the precious time we have at home with our families after a long day at work, but who hasn't had that time interrupted by a commercial telemarketers?[] Consumers should be able to stop these calls if they so choose and the FTC's creation of a national list will make it easier for people to enjoy peace and quite at home," Schakowsky said.

Schakowsky added that this legislation will protect the first amendment rights of telemarketers and will allow them to continue to solicit consumers who do not place their names on the do-not-call database.[] "This legislation protects the ability of legitimate charities and not-for-profit organizations to make calls.[] However, even if in those circumstances any person asks not to be called again by that organization, that request must be honored," she said.